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Letter dated 18 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you a communication entitled "Uzbekistan — Republic of Korea: new stage in cooperation" summarizing the visit to Uzbekistan by H. E. Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea, which took place from 10 to 12 May 2009 (see annex).

One of the key agreements reached during the visit, on attracting South Korean investments to the free industrial economic zone, Navoi, is considered by both Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea as one of the important elements for ensuring the sustainable economic development not only of the two nations but of the whole Central Asian region. The airport at Navoi city is becoming a major hub for the transcontinental transit of cargo between South-East Asia and the Pacific and Europe.

I would appreciate if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 49.

(*Signed*) Murad **Askarov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 18 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Uzbekistan — Republic of Korea: a new stage in cooperation

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, the President of the Republic of Korea, Lee Myung-bak, arrived in Uzbekistan on a State visit on 10 May 2009.

Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea are separated by a great distance, but that is unimportant when relations between the two countries are based on the principles of common interest and mutual trust and respect. This is clearly evident in the fruitful Uzbek-South Korean cooperation. The current visit of Lee Myung-bak will be not only a new stage in the development of bilateral relations, but also a logical continuation of meetings at the highest level. For instance, the Presidents of Uzbekistan and South Korea met twice in 2008 alone.

Meetings at various levels are regularly conducted within the framework of inter-State relations. Any country seeking to achieve progress expands the scale of its cooperation with reliable partners. Today's visit by Lee Myung-bak demonstrates the commonality of the positions held by the leaders of Uzbekistan and South Korea in this regard and confirms the mutual desire to strengthen and develop relations between our countries.

A ceremony marking the official visit by the President of the Republic of Korea was held at the Durmen residence on 11 May. A guard of honour stood in formation in honour of the eminent guest. The flags of the two States were raised, and their national anthems were played. Islam Karimov and Lee Myung-bak passed in front of the honour guard.

The talks began with a private conversation between the Presidents. Islam Karimov and Lee Myung-bak discussed the state of and prospects for Uzbek-South Korean relations and exchanged views on questions of regional and international importance that are of mutual interest.

Islam Karimov pointed out that the summit taking place was a clear demonstration of South Korea's interest in developing ties with Uzbekistan, and Tashkent also places a high value on cooperation with Seoul.

Lee Myung-bak expressed gratitude to Islam Karimov for the invitation to visit Uzbekistan and stressed that the meeting presented a good opportunity to discuss the state of mutual relations and have a thorough exchange of views on long-term cooperation issues.

The Presidents discussed security questions, particularly, cooperation in fighting international terrorism and extremism and the smuggling of arms and narcotic drugs in order to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Questions relating to cooperation within the framework of international organizations were discussed. Uzbekistan and South Korea support one another in

the international arena. Uzbekistan has supported candidates of the Republic of Korea for United Nations bodies, including for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. South Korea supported Uzbekistan's entering the Dialogue on Cooperation in Asia and our country's candidacy for membership in the World Trade Organization and accession by the national airline Uzbekiston havo iullari to the Sky Team global airline alliance. On the whole, political cooperation is constantly at the centre of attention of the leaders of the two countries. A mechanism for holding regular mutual consultations between foreign policy departments has been set up.

Furthermore, Tashkent supports Seoul's position on a peaceful settlement of the problems of the Korean peninsula, the New Asian Diplomacy initiative of the Republic of Korea's leaders and their energy strategy. Seoul places a high value on the results of the initiative by Uzbekistan's leader aimed at establishing a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia.

Economic cooperation is expanding dynamically. Uzbekistan and South Korea are carrying out large-scale joint projects in such fields as the oil and gas sector, mining, mechanical engineering, automobile manufacturing, the textile industry, logistics, construction and information and communication technology. Meetings of the joint Uzbek-Korean Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation are held regularly, at which the possibilities of finding new areas of cooperation, enriching the content of cooperation and expanding the volume of trade and investment are explored. An interdepartmental committee on energy and natural resources has been established.

Islam Karimov and Lee Myung-bak noted that relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea are developing in the spirit of the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership signed in 2006. Confidence was expressed that this visit would raise relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea to a qualitatively new level.

The talks between the Presidents continued at the extended meeting of the two countries' official delegations. The main focus during the talks was on trade and economic, investment and cultural cooperation.

South Korea is one of Uzbekistan's major investment partners. The level of its investments in our economy is higher than $2 billion. There are large-scale projects in the area of oil and gas, mining, petrochemistry, logistics and construction. The Free Industrial Economic Zone built at the Navoi city International Airport is a clear example of this. The Transcontinental Intermodal Logistics Centre in the Zone is the only one on the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), where goods will be processed and their distribution and storage will be carried out efficiently. The flow of goods between Asia and Europe will take place through this centre, which will become a major link in the global cargo transport network.

The Uzbekiston havo iullari national airline leased from South Korea two A300-600F aircraft, which were transferred to the Logistics Centre. In this way, the Centre's potential has increased, and it now has access to all the world's goods markets. The A300-600F aircraft have a maximum cargo capacity of 40 tons and can cover distances of up to 7,000 km.

It should be noted that there is growing interest abroad in the Free Industrial Economic Zone. A conference took place in Seoul in March of this year devoted to new opportunities in Uzbekistan in the area of investment cooperation. South Korean businessmen were thoroughly informed about the Zone's facilities and

possibilities. As a result, agreement was reached on 35 investment projects totalling more than $500 million.

In cooperation with South Korea, Uzbekistan has introduced complex science- and technology-intensive production techniques, whose output is distinguished by high added value, and has taken a well-deserved place among the few powers in the world that have their own automobile manufacturing industry.

With regard to trade relations, it should be noted that a most-favoured-nation regime was established between Uzbekistan and South Korea in 1992. In 2008, the volume of reciprocal trade reached a record level, exceeding $1.0567 billion. There are 351 Uzbek-South Korean joint enterprises in operation in Uzbekistan, and 91 of that country's companies have opened representation offices here.

At their meeting, Islam Karimov and Lee Myung-bak highly appraised the state of commercial and economic and investment cooperation. At the same time, the Presidents pointed out that the results achieved do not fully reflect the possibilities and potential of the two countries. The President of the Republic of Korea, therefore, came to Uzbekistan accompanied by a large delegation of businessmen. Questions relating to making greater use of existing possibilities were thoroughly discussed during the talks.

Note was taken of the consistent development of cultural cooperation. A Korean education centre has been in operation in Tashkent since 1992. There are Korean language and culture centres at the Uzbek State University of World Languages and the Samarkand State Foreign Languages Institute, and there is an information technology centre at Tashkent Information Technology University. Completion of the project to open the Uzbekistan-Korea Occupational Training Centre in Tashkent was yet another achievement in the field of education.

Each year, 360 young men and women study such subjects as computer assembly, graphics, electrical engineering, agricultural equipment repair and automobile maintenance at the Centre.

The Uzbekistan-Republic of Korea Friendship Society, established in 1999 in Tashkent, makes a major contribution to the development of bilateral cultural ties. Festivals, exhibitions, concerts and many other cultural events are held regularly. These have included a photography exhibition held in the Republic of Korea entitled "The Poetry of Central Asia", the Sugdiena Ensemble's performance of a concert programme entitled "The Spirit of the Great Silk Route", the Ipak Iuli Festival and the traditional annual Korean Culture Week in Tashkent. South Korean musicians and performers participate regularly and actively in the Sharq Taronalari international music festival in Samarkand.

During the talks, an agreement was reached on further development of ties in that area.

At the conclusion of the talks, Islam Karimov and Lee Myung-bak signed a joint statement between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea.

An agreement on visa-free travel for citizens holding diplomatic passports was signed by the two countries. An agreement was reached between the Government of Uzbekistan and Eximbank of South Korea for the Economic Cooperation Development Fund to issue a subsidized loan worth $10 million for a project to upgrade and modernize medical equipment at the V. Vakhidov Centre for Cardiac

Surgery. The Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of Uzbekistan and the Korea Industrial Complex Corporation signed a memorandum of understanding on joint measures to attract Korean investment to the Navoi Free Industrial-Economic Zone. The Uzbekneftegas national holding company and the Korean National Oil Corporation signed a memorandum on joint development of an investment package in the Fergana region of Uzbekistan.

The Presidents met with representatives of the mass media. It was noted at the press conference that the talks had been constructive and had taken place in a friendly atmosphere. The agreements reached will benefit the development of the two countries and enhance the well-being of the peoples of Uzbekistan and South Korea.

"Lee Myung-bak's State visit to Uzbekistan marks an important stage in bilateral relations, and is yet another testament to the aspirations of the parties to develop mutual cooperation," said Islam Karimov. "The fact that in 2008 sales volume increased by nearly 80 per cent and that there is a trend toward steady growth of South Korean investments in the Uzbekistan economy are indicators of the dynamism of our cooperation."

"The Republic of Uzbekistan is South Korean's main partner in Central Asia," said Lee Myung-bak. "During the talks, we exchanged opinions about bilateral relations and regional and international problems. Our views correspond on the issues considered, and that pleases us. We firmly believe that, despite the global economic crisis, stable economic development is taking place in Uzbekistan. This is the result of President Karimov's far-seeing policy."

President Karimov and President Lee Myung-bak met with representatives of the business communities of both countries.

In the afternoon, the President of the Republic of Korea, accompanied by the President of Uzbekistan, visited Mustakillik Square and placed flowers at the foot of the Independence and Humanism Monument, which is the symbol of the country's freedom, bright future and noble aspirations. He had praise for the original work being done to provide public amenities, emphasizing that the country's main square was truly a symbol of the freedom of the Uzbek people.

Lee Myung-bak also visited Memory Square, where he viewed the Book of Memory, in which the names of our compatriots who perished during the Second World War are inscribed in gold letters.

The Presidents of the two countries visited the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. The South Korean leader met with faculty members and students and was briefed on its academic activities and education system. He had high praise for the university facilities and the conditions provided for the students.

President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of World Economy and Diplomacy.